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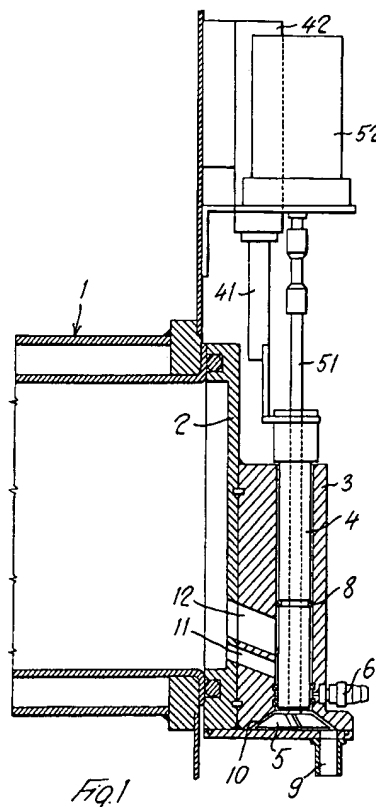
(71) Applicant: **Carpigiani S.r.L.**
45, Via Emilia
I-40011 Anzola Emilia, Bologna(IT)

(72) Inventor: **Cocchi, Gino**
Via Mulinella 39
I-40137 Bologna(IT)

(74) Representative: **Porsia, Attilio, Dr. et al**
c/o Succ. Ing. Fischetti & Weber
Via Caffaro 3/2
I-16124 Genova (IT)

(54) **Machine for making and dispensing ice cream shakes.**

(57) The machine comprises an ice cream making machine, and a duct for feeding the produced ice cream to a mixing chamber; means for feeding one or more syrups to said mixing chamber and means for mixing the ice cream and the syrups in said mixing chamber. The syrup feeding means are located between the ice cream feeding duct and the mixing chamber, in an area which is isolated from the ice cream feeding duct by at least one sealing element.



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The present invention relates to machines for making and dispensing ice cream shakes, ice cream slushes or the like frozen confections. The term ice cream shake is used to mean a flavored frozen confection which is made from a neutral frozen confection such as ice cream, frozen custard or the like blended and thoroughly mixed with a syrup essence of the desired flavour.

Machines of the type referred to above are known for example from US-A-4 580 905; US-A-3 830 407; US-A 2 669 945; US-A-3 149 756; IT-A-1 103 775. The said machines comprise a machine for making the ice cream, means for feeding the ice cream produced to a dispensing door, means for feeding one or more syrup essences and means for mixing the said ice cream with the syrup essence. Thus, for example, Italian Patent No. 1,103,775, or U.S. Patent No. 4,580,905 describe one such machine which comprises a metering/dispensing tube joined to the freezing compartment door and connected to the latter by means of a pipe; a piston which is slidable in the said tube and is actuated mechanically, electrically or pneumatically; two or more syrup injectors for flavouring the ice cream; and a rotor for mixing the said syrup essence, driven by a drive shaft which is coaxial and concentric with the said piston. In machines of the type described above, there is a recurrent problem whereby, when changing the syrup essence used to flavour the plain ice cream dispensed, it is also necessary to clean out any residues of the syrup used previously from the unit.

The present invention proposes to overcome these drawbacks of the known prior art machines by providing a device enabling ice cream shakes of various flavours to be produced, without the said flavours becoming intermixed. This is possible using a machine for making and dispensing ice cream shakes of the type described previously, in which the syrup essence injectors are located between the ice cream delivery pipe and the mixing chamber, in an area which may be isolated from the remaining portion of said tube by means of at least one sealing element.

Advantageously, the said syrup essence injectors are located in the area delimited by two sealing elements, in the area between the ice cream delivery pipe and the mixing chamber.

A further feature of the invention resides in the fact that the said injectors are located beneath a sealing element interposed between the mixing chamber and the ice cream delivery pipe, and that there is an additional injector which can dispense water in order to wash out the syrup essence injection area.

A still further feature of the present invention is that, above the ice cream delivery pipe, there is a pipe of larger cross section which is used to wash

out the unit.

Further advantages and features will become clear from the following description of two preferred embodiments of the invention, made with reference to the appended drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a view in longitudinal section of a first embodiment of the machine according to the present invention.

Figure 2 is a detail, enlarged, from Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a cross section taken along the plane of line I-I of Figure 2.

Figure 4 is longitudinal section of a detail of a second embodiment of the device according to the present invention, and

Figure 5 is a cross section taken along the plane of line II-II of Figure 4.

With reference to the drawings, and with particular reference to Figure 1, 1 denotes a freezing barrel of a machine for making ice cream shakes according to the present invention. This barrel is refrigerated by, for instance, the evaporator of a conventional refrigeration mechanism (not shown) which is disposed around the outer side of the freezing barrel, and in the said freezing barrel a beater (not shown) is rotatably mounted, in conventional manner. All the said means are known per se and will therefore not be described.

This barrel 1 is closed at one end by a suitable door 2. The door 2 is in turn joined to the block 3 in which the soft ice cream homogenising and dispensing tube 31 is formed. The door 2 and the tube 31 communicate via the pipes 11 and 12 as will be described later. A piston 4 is slidably mounted inside the tube 31 and is driven by means of the piston rod 41 which is connected to drive means, in this case pneumatic means 42; The piston 4 can also be actuated mechanically or electrically. The piston 4 is provided at an intermediate position with a sealing ring 8. Close to the lower end of the tube 31, on the internal surface of the said tube and a short distance apart, are located two sealing rings 7 of the O-ring type. Numeral 11 denotes the ice-cream feeding pipe connecting the ice cream freezing barrel 1, in which the ice cream is prepared in a single plain flavour, to the tube 31 at a position just above the said sealing rings 7. A second pipe 12 of a cross section substantially larger than the cross section of pipe 11, connect the barrel 1 to the tube 31 at a position just above pipe 11. 62 are injection pipes, connected to the syrup injectors 6 for flavoring the ice cream. Said pipes 62 open into the area 61 between the two sealing elements 7. At the lower end of the tube 31 is a frustoconical chamber 10, called the mixing chamber, in which the ice cream delivered from pipe 11 is mixed together with the essence flavours delivered through pipes 62 by means of a rotor 5. The rotor 5 is actuated by a

drive shaft 51 connected to a small electric motor 52. The mixing chamber 10 communicates with the outside through the spout 9 for dispensing the flavored soft ice cream.

In operation, the piston 4 is first raised from its lowermost position just below the lowermost O-ring 7 (position of Figure 1), to a position so as to fully uncover the opening of pipe 11, but so as to block off the opening of pipe 12 (solid line position of Figure 2). In this position of the piston, the ice cream is delivered from compartment 1 into the tube 31 through the pipe 11. Soon thereafter the piston 4 is caused to be pushed down to the O-ring 7 just above the injection pipes 62, so that ice cream passes from 31 into the area 61 delimited by the two sealing elements 7, from which area it removes the residue of syrup essence dispensed previously, which consist of a thin coating of fluid on the walls of the said area 61 of the tube 31. At this point a new batch of syrup essence is caused to be dispensed through pipes 62, given that the ice cream flavoured in this way will not be contaminated in any way by previous dispensing operations. By further pushing down the piston 4 to a position just below the lowermost O-ring 7, the ice cream and syrup mixture is delivered to the mixing chamber 10, in which it is homogenised by the rotor 5, and from which it is dispensed in the form of flavored ice cream shake via the dispensing spout 9.

In this way, in order to ensure that the various flavours do not get mixed together, the introduction of the ice cream through the pipe 11 and the injection of the syrup essence through the injectors 6, are staggered. This arrangement means that only a small amount of ice cream passing between the two sealing elements 7 is needed in order to clean out any residues from the area 61. In this case the role played by the sealing elements is very important since they prevent the syrup from diffusing inside the tube 31, by restricting it to a very small area.

The number of injectors used in a machine according to the invention may vary from 2 to as many as may be conveniently positioned in the block 3. In the described embodiment 3 injectors are used.

Figures 4 and 5 show a second embodiment of the invention. According to this embodiment, the tube 31 has a single sealing ring 7 between the mixing chamber 10 and the ice cream inlet pipe 11. The injectors 6 are located (Figure 4) close to the upper end of the chamber 10, on one side of the block 3. On the other side of the block 3 is located an injector 6' which dispenses water. The said injector 6' is connected through a duct 64 to a duct 65 which in turn intersects the ducts 63 introducing the flavoured essences into the mixing

chamber 10. The injector 6' may be actuated after each ice cream shake dispensing operation in order to wash out the residues from the previous syrup injecting operation.

According to this second embodiment of the invention, the ice cream and the syrup are introduced simultaneously into the area 66 above the mixing chamber 10.

In both embodiments of the present invention a pipe 12 is shown disposed above the pipe 11, which pipe 12 is normally closed by the piston 4. This pipe is put into communication with the tube 31, by lifting the piston 4 to a position above said pipe (position in dotted lines of Figure 2) during the washing operation of the machine, in order to ensure a greater flow volume of washing water and detergent from the barrel 1 toward the tube 31. In this manner a more efficient washing action is obtained and considerable time is saved.

Claims

1. Machine for making and dispensing ice cream shakes of various flavours comprising a freezing barrel (1), a door 2 closing one end of the said barrel; a block (3) joined to the said door and comprising a homogenising and dispensing tube (31) formed inside said block and connected to the freezing barrel by means of a pipe (11); a piston (4) which is slidable in the said tube (31); means (42) for driving said piston along said tube (31); at least two syrup injectors (6) opening into said tube (31) for flavouring the said ice cream; a chamber (10) for mixing the ice cream with said syrups; and a rotor (5) connected to a drive shaft (51) which is coaxial and concentric with the said piston (4) and connected to drive means (52), characterized in that said syrup essence injectors (6) are located between the ice cream inlet pipe (11) and the mixing chamber (10) in an area (61,66) which is defined by means of at least one sealing element (7), the said area (61,66) being isolated from the remaining portion of the tube (31) whenever the piston (4) is lowered into engagement with said sealing element (7).
2. Machine according to Claim 1, characterized in that the said injectors (6) are located in an area (61) delimited by two axially spaced sealing elements (7), in an area between the ice cream inlet pipe (11) and the mixing chamber (10).
3. Machine according to Claim 1, in which the said injectors are located beneath a sealing element (7) located between the mixing chamber (10) and the ice cream inlet pipe (11).

4. Machine according to Claim 3, in which there is an injector (6') for dispensing water into the syrup essence injection area.

5. Machine according to Claim 1, in which, above the ice cream inlet pipe (11), there is a second pipe (12).

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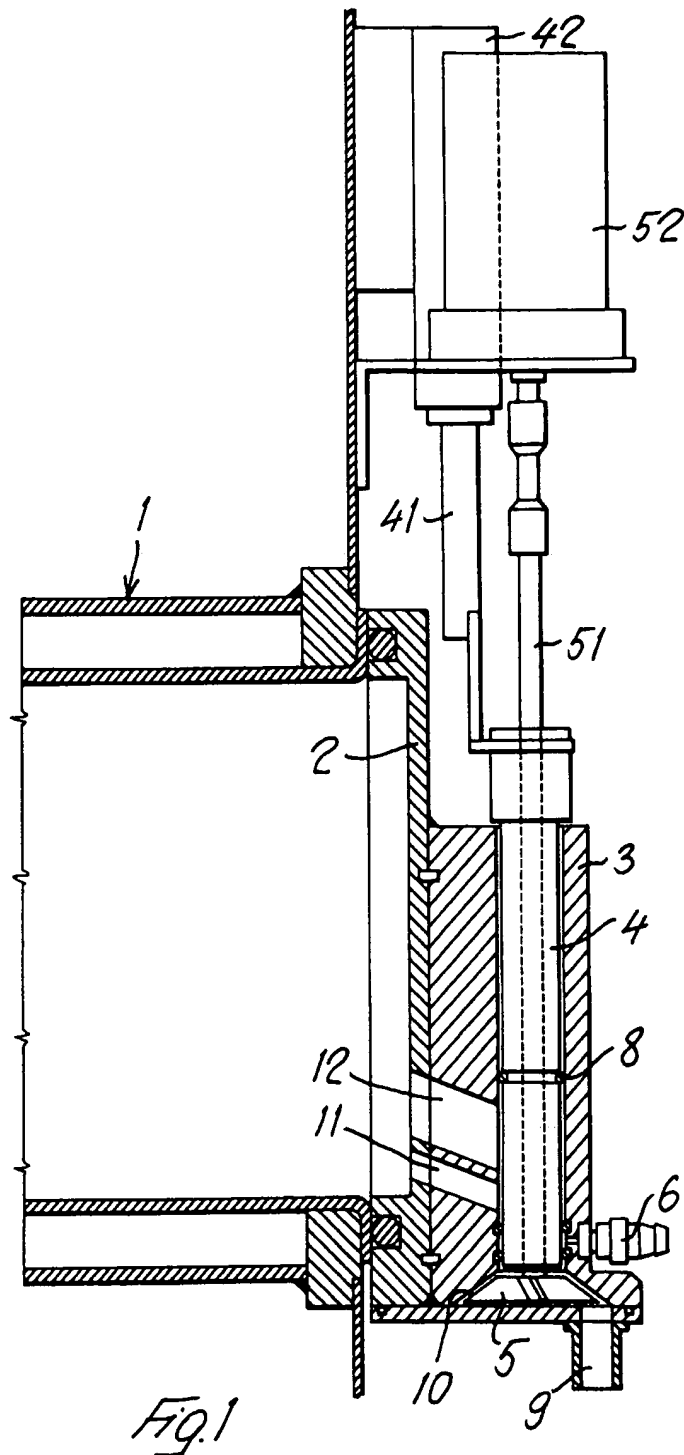
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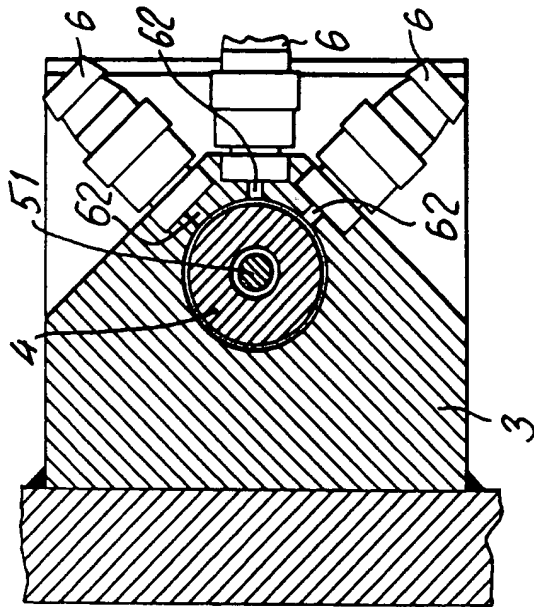


Fig. 3

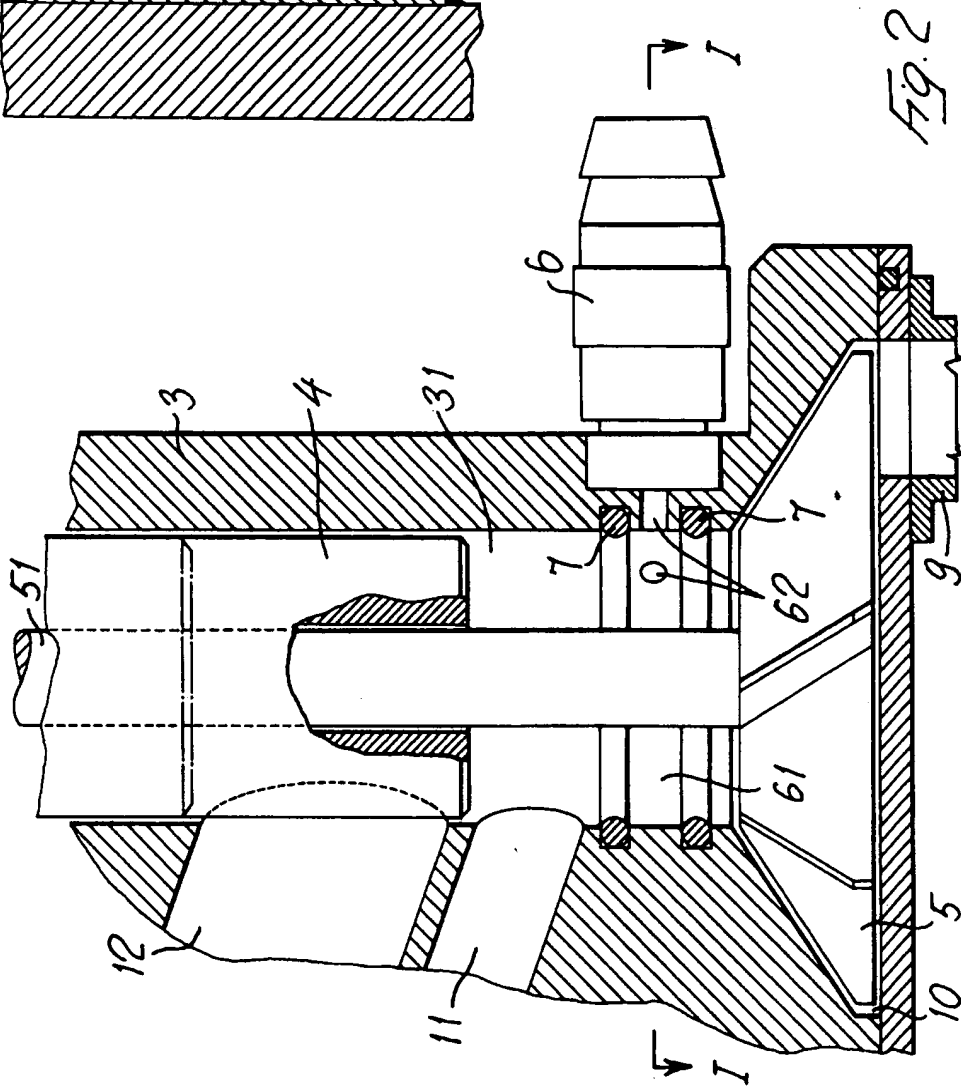
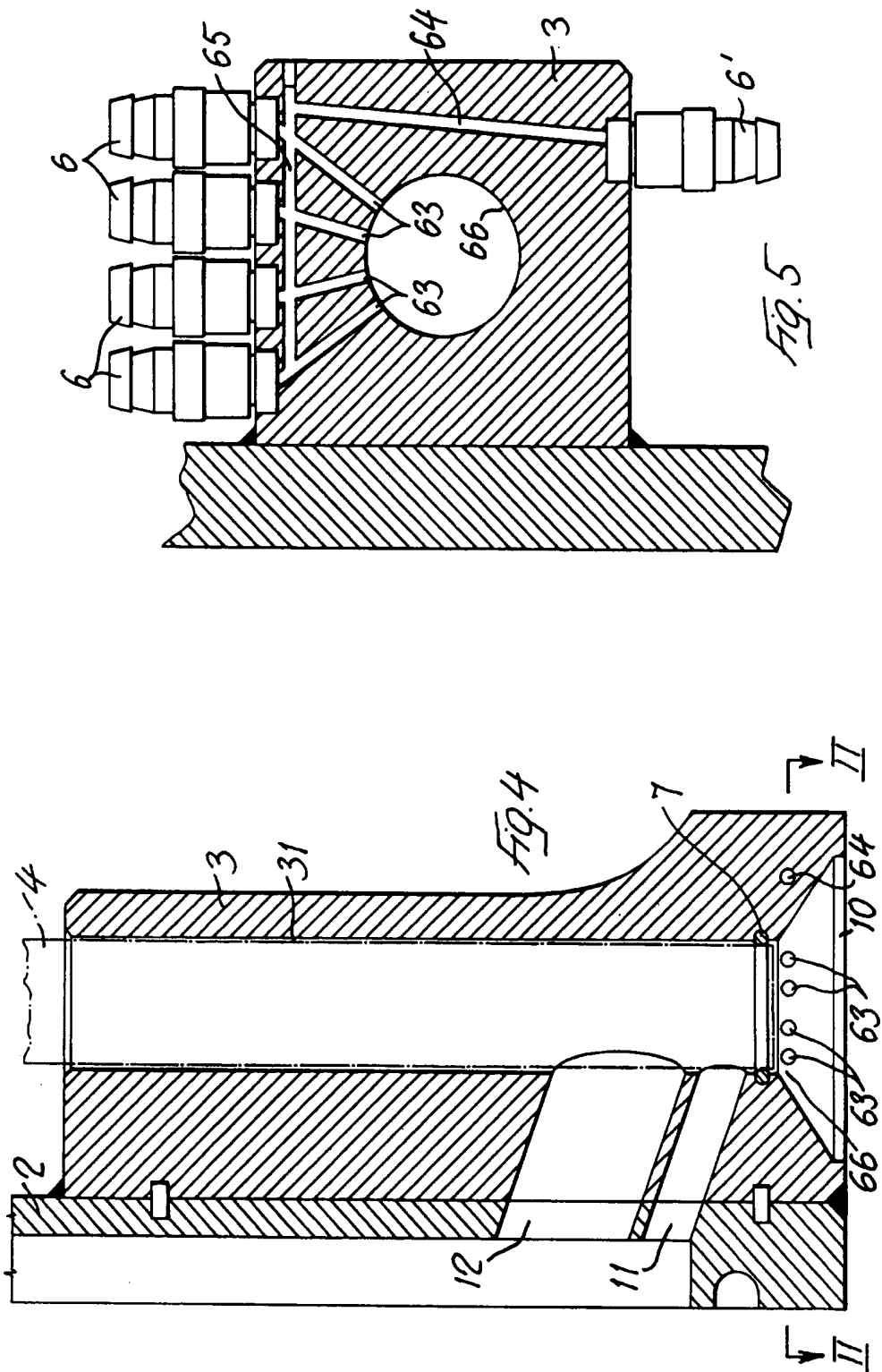


Fig. 2





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 93 11 8257

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.CI.5)
X	US-A-4 580 905 (S.W. SCHWITTERS, A.C. LARSON)	1,3	A23G9/28 A23G9/30
A	* column 2, line 22 - line 51; claims 1,5; figures 1,2,4 * * column 4, line 3 - column 5, line 4 * ---	2	
X	US-A-3 830 407 (E. WIERLO) * column 1, line 6-55; claims 1,4; figures 1,3,4 * * column 3, line 53 - column 4, line 2 * ---	1,3	
A	US-A-2 669 945 (C.W. WILDEBOUR) * column 3, line 44 - line 46; figure 4 * * column 1, line 39 - line 48 * ---	2,3	
A	US-A-3 149 756 (P. CARPIGIANI) * column 3 - column 4; figures 7,8,10 * ---	2	
A	WO-A-88 09766 (E. GERBER) * page 9, line 18 - line 23; claims 1,2,4-8,10-16,18-21; figures 3,4,13 * * page 16, line 9 - line 23 * * page 11, line 28 - page 14, line 18 * ---	4	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.CI.5) A23G
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 011, no. 371 (C-462)3 December 1987 & JP-A-62 146 568 (NISSEI REIKI KK) 30 June 1987 * abstract * ---	5	
A	US-A-3 276 633 (R.E. RAHAUSER) * figure 4 * -----	5	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 12 January 1994	Examiner KANBIER, T
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			